

# THE INDYPENDENT

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**WHY WE MARCH, P4**

**KEEANGA-YAMAHTTA  
TAYLOR ON WORKING  
CLASS FEMINISM, P13**

**EILEEN MYLES ON 'THE  
REVOLUTION,' P19**

**... AND MORE**

## INAUGURAL REVOLT

**SPECIAL WOMEN'S MARCH ON  
WASHINGTON EDITION**





THE INDYPENDENT

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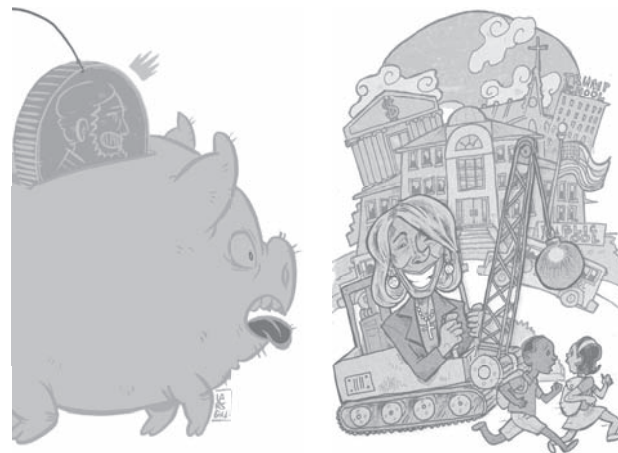
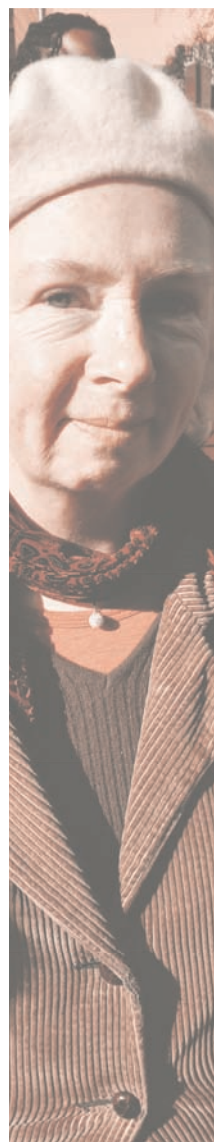
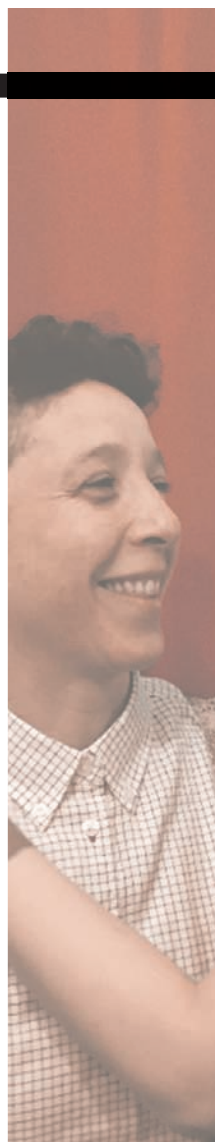
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DAVID SHANKBONE/WIKICOMMONS







CHRIS GOLDBERG/FICKR

# WHY WE MARCH

## 'IT'S ABOUT WHAT THE HIJAB MEANS TO YOU'

BY AFAF NASHER

The Muslim community is certainly not monolithic, and Muslim women don't all look the same. There are those who wear a hijab, those who wear a facial covering called a niqab and those who don't cover their hair at all. I'm of Middle Eastern origin, and I'm Arab. So I'm your more typical Muslim, if I can even say "typical." By that I mean the ones that are always portrayed in a negative way on TV.

When they're yelling those Arabic words on television, I'm saying, "You're not even pronouncing it right, dammit!" But at the same time, I grew up in New York. I'm a Muslim, but culturally speaking, I'm American.

You have to understand the significance of the hijab for those that choose to wear it. It's the reason why I, as an individual, will not succumb to any kind of fear relating to wearing a hijab. It goes beyond a religious mandate. It is an outward representation of my morals, of my ethics. It's a reminder to me and an expectation to everyone else of how I should be treating them and how I expect to be treated.

I have four daughters, and I tell them: "Look, because of your outward appearance, people automatically know you're a Muslim. They're not going to take a look at you and say, 'She's a young girl who's still developing who she is and what she believes.' They just take a picture of a Muslim person and that's it. And they put you into this one category." It is in one way a burden, but at the same time it's a privilege and an honor to do it.

Wearing a hijab is a reminder of the Islamic principles you're supposed to be living out. In Islam, just as in any

religion, there is a requirement that people are honest with one another, that they deal with other people fairly and justly. You don't have to be afraid of showing those very admirable principles to the outside world.

If you say, "I'm going to be afraid of wearing a hijab," you're succumbing to fear of hatred and of bias and of discrimination. When the hijab is something that's so positive, why would you succumb to that?

I have mothers come up to me whose kids are taking public transportation, and they say: "Is it safe for my son to wear a kufi, or wear cultural attire? And my daughter?" I've had grown people — professionals, doctors — who will say: "I walk into the office and I'm afraid of what my clients may think."

What I tell people is, "Look, this is a personal decision for you. It's about what that hijab means to you and how much strength you derive from it."

Having said that, you have to use common sense. It's not meant to put you in a position where you're fearing for your life.

One thing that I tell people all the time is to be aware of their surroundings. I tell young people in particular: "Stop putting the earphones in your ears when you're walking around with a hijab on. You want to be aware. You want to be hearing what's being said around you."

I tell people, young and old, that when they're at mosque events, or they're going for prayer services at nighttime, to not walk alone. We have a lot of incidents that occur around the mosques. When people are coming out of prayer services late at night and they're walking alone, they're an easy target.

I test my kids: "If you're being followed and somebody is making remarks, what do you do?" I yelled at my daughter once when she said, "Well, I'm gonna call you and try to get home." I told her, "You duck into

### MEANING:

The hijab is a reminder to those who wear it to live out Islamic principles of fairness and justice.

## QUEER & CONCERNED

BY ELIZABETH PRESS

On November 11, 2016, I decided to "publicly" invite my sweetie to marry me on Facebook. It was three days after Donald Trump and Mike Pence — who has said that gay couples signaled "societal collapse" — were elected. Our engagement was a protest and a mourning: an expression of my sadness and frustration with those who I know and love who voted for Trump. It felt like they voted against us. I was scared but ready to make a stand.

We decided to get married before Inauguration Day, and on December 30 I met my partner at the City Clerk's office in Manhattan. Some friends and family joined us. The lines were long — out the door long. Some couples were in jeans but many were in elaborate wedding gowns. We were dressed in black.

What exactly will the incoming administration's policies be? No one knows the answer to that question. But we are concerned for the ways that these policies will affect all of us.

We are among the many LGBTQ people scrambling right now to finally replace the gender identity marker on legal IDs, get a name change, figure out what channels to health care there might be if and when protections are revoked and, in our case, get our paperwork in order to try to protect ourselves and our family.

As a queer person whose partner is seven months pregnant, I decided it was important to get married immediately. While my partner and I have some ambivalence about marriage, our domestic partnership is not a federally protected status. I know that Trump can't unilaterally do away with marriage equality. But I also know that he is about to appoint Supreme Court justices who can.

We have to think about protecting my parental rights to our child. As a non-biological parent, even though my name will appear on the birth cer-

tificate, I need to adopt my child to make sure that I have a legal tie that will be recognized by all states and countries. This requires us to go through the incredibly invasive and expensive process of second parent adoption (something that is *not* an option in every state).

In order for me to adopt our child, we have to answer a barrage of questions about our financial, medical and personal situation. We have to attest to our parenting philosophies and prove that we are good parents in a good environment. A social worker will visit and a background check will be done on all members of our household.

We cannot finalize this until after the baby is here. For us, this will be a couple of months after the new administration takes office.

Nonetheless, as a white cisgender queer couple, we have a lot of privilege and protections. What will happen for those who don't, particularly transgender people and queer immigrants? Protection of medical access regardless of gender identity was directly named in the Affordable Care Act. This will likely disappear with a repeal of the law, which Republicans on Capitol Hill have already put into motion. Meanwhile, the experience for queer and trans people in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention has already been violent and scary. The desire to re-emphasize racial profiling as a central police tactic will put a lot of queer and trans people of color at risk.

Getting married was a happy event to share with our loved ones. It was also a way to speak to the anger and sadness so many of us feel, and as we take on the uncertainties of this moment, affirm the resilience of the community we have together.

Elizabeth Press (left) and her partner Angela Beallor.



EMILY ORDWAY

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# WHEN YOUR BOSS LOVES TRUMP & YOUR CO-WORKERS FOLLOW

BY QUON

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is based on a conversation with a woman who works on Wall Street. She agreed to discuss the increase in sexism, racism and xenophobia she has encountered in the months before and after the presidential election on the condition we identify her simply as "Quon" to ward off potential reprisals. We have lightly edited her remarks for concision and clarity.*

There are 20 of us in the office. It's mostly male, which I assume is the case for most financial organizations — older white men who live in Long Island, Staten Island, New Jersey and the nice areas in Queens.

We deal in bonds.

There was always some animosity toward Hillary Clinton, but never a resounding support for Donald Trump until a couple of months before the election. I can pinpoint the moment. My boss, who is a woman, was speaking to somebody and asked, "Well who do you think is going to win?" And the guy was like, "100 percent it's gonna be Trump." And you could see the little cogs start to turn in her head and she was like, "You know what? I think I underestimated him."

That's when she started fully going for Trump and the rest of the office followed. I started noticing she was saying "yuge" a lot more — unironically. There's a "Make America Great Again" hat in my office, a pen with Trump's head on it and a Hillary nutcracker floating around. It's all very

fucked up. It's mostly Trump's personality that they're drawn to, this idea that "Trump says what he wants. He's a good businessman."

It's an open office. Nobody has cubicles, so things are just kind of shouted across the office at different points of the day. We have a TV in the middle of the office where Bloomberg, sometimes CNN and very occasionally Fox News will be on all day. Certain headlines will come up and it will be discussed across the office.

That's also why it's kind of a scary office environment.

When the whole "grab her by the pussy" thing happened and all those women came forward saying Trump groped them, the men in the office were vehemently defending him, saying, "What are they coming up with this stuff for?" It was victim-blaming, like the victims were wrong and just trying to get Trump in trouble, despite the things that were actually coming out of his mouth!

My boss was pretty much silent on the issue. I was wondering if she would realize that this guy's psychopathic, but instead she stayed on the Trump train by mainly disparaging Hillary. She said Hillary is a "bought woman," and "I heard she hates dogs."

I hear sprinklings of racist comments. They're very skeptical of black people, of Mexicans. Any kind of minority is just generally looked down on. People who aren't white are viewed with suspicion. They're very much interested in what China is doing over there — what those Chinese people are doing — even though me and a couple other people are Chinese.

Everybody likes me, and that's fine, but with anybody outside of their circle, their family at the office, it's like, "Who are these people? What are they trying to get out of us?"

I have years of practice biting my tongue from growing up in a Republican household. I don't want to bring anything up, because my coworkers are very irrational when they're arguing.

If I got into a conversation and pointed out specific political points, they would say: "Oh well, you're a millen-

*Continued on page 17*

# THE SEXISM I SEE EVERY DAY IN DIVORCE COURT

BY ANN SCHNEIDER

I practice law in a highly regulated environment: family law.

Tight legislative regulation of domestic relations is needed because your typical jilted dude will retaliate economically when he's kicked out of bed. Where he was once happy to waste money on cable TV, cocaine or cruises with her, now he'll say, "I love my children, but why do I hafta give money to that bitch?"

Divorce laws are set at the state, not federal, level. But with the example of a thrice-married, twice-divorced, admitted groper and accused rapist in the White House, men are likely to be emboldened by his example. Trump has paid out big awards to buy silence, but otherwise paid no consequences.

Abandonment of women and children is so common in this country, it is not even socially stigmatized. There isn't even a name for it. We swim in a sea of misogyny every day.

New York has had a fairly feminist judiciary for several decades, so Trump's presidency won't make a difference for those who can afford to litigate. But the complex and dehumanizing social-welfare environment nationwide pits low-income mothers and fathers against each other for mere crumbs. Nationwide, the average amount of child support actually collected is just \$314 per month. Considering the amount of grief involved in suing and collecting, many women don't bother, or will sell themselves short. Men know this. It encourages them to act badly.

In my mind, it's not the adultery that is the crime. It is the economic dependence of women, especially mothers, on one man for her family's food, shelter and health care. This marks us as an uncivilized nation. We need free or subsidized, quality day care. Child-care work deserves to be well compensated. Only true feminist solidarity can turn the tide.

Ann Schneider



CHRIS LI/UNSPLASH



JONATHAN NATHAN



# NEW YEAR PROMISES AN UPHILL BATTLE ON ABORTION

## WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

BY MAUREEN SHAW

It may be a new year, but anti-choice politicians will be sticking to their same old resolution: to undermine abortion access whenever and how-ever possible. Some 41 state legislatures will be in session in the next two weeks, as *Rewire* staff reporter Teddy Wilson noted in a December 21 article, and if 2016 is any indication of what lies ahead, many of these legislatures are ready to inflict widespread damage to this basic human right.

Indeed, we are facing an onslaught of attacks on abortion rights — at both the state and federal levels — and must gear up for an epic uphill battle. The pro-choice movement is motivated, creative and determined, but beyond that, we must also understand our adversaries' tactics and maneuvers.

Briefly, let's review the past year.

Throughout most of 2016, Texas appeared to be the crown jewel in our country's anti-choice royalty, with an appearance at the Supreme Court to defend provisions in HB 2, its omnibus anti-abortion bill. (Spoiler alert: In a 5-3 decision, the Court declared unconstitutional those provisions, which mandated providers have admitting privileges at a local hospital and meet the same standards for ambulatory surgical centers.) Even after the stinging Supreme Court defeat, Texas refused to simply roll over. Instead, its Department of State Health Services (DSHS) doubled down, proposing rules that require the burial or cremation of fetal remains (the Center for Reproductive Rights has filed a legal challenge). DSHS also published a booklet (ironically titled "A Woman's Right to Know") promoting debunked associations between abortion, breast cancer and suicide risks.

Not to be outdone by its southern cohort, Ohio closed out 2016 with a bevy of anti-choice moves. While the Buckeye State is no stranger to anti-abortion efforts, its legislature appeared emboldened by Trump's election win (and his forthcoming Supreme Court pick), and passed an unconstitutional six-week abortion ban as part of a larger childhood abuse and neglect bill, as well as a 20-week abortion ban with no exceptions for rape or incest. Within days, Ohio's anti-choice governor, John Kasich, vetoed the six-week ban but signed a 20-week ban—which has its own dangers—into law.

Ohio also revoked the operating license of one of the state's last abortion clinics for its failure to obtain a transfer agreement with a nearby hospital for emergencies, a requirement that seems to change depending on the week. On the same day Governor Kasich signed the 20-week abortion ban — a big day for Ohioans — a judge issued an emergency order allowing the clinic to remain open while it appeals. This is a thin ray of hope for people of reproductive age in Ohio, who face numerous obstacles in obtaining abortion care, including a quickly diminishing num-

ber of providers.

Although the news out of Texas and Ohio garnered national media attention, those states weren't the only ones working overtime to curtail abortion access in 2016. Eighteen states enacted 50 anti-choice restrictions (like extended waiting periods and clinic regulations, "D and E" bans and fetal tissue research restrictions, among others) in 2016, according to the Guttmacher Institute's latest analysis. An Indiana lawmaker went so far as to propose a total ban on abortion in the state, which he promised to formally introduce in the coming weeks.

But even without introducing partial or total bans, some state legislators found ways to stigmatize abortion care. Just look at lawmakers in Oklahoma, who took a cue from Texas and got inventive: Senator A.J. Griffin (R-Guthrie) introduced a bill that would have required anti-choice signage to appear in schools, restaurants and other public restrooms.

Individually, these state-level attacks on abortion are causes for concern, but when considered collectively, they're downright terrifying. They represent a national trend, one that's gaining momentum in the wake of the presidential election. Trump unabashedly ran on an anti-abortion platform — even promising during an October debate the immediate overturn of *Roe v. Wade* — leaving anti-choice lawmakers giddy at the possibility of states once again determining the future of abortion rights. Given the frightening scope of forthcoming attacks against reproductive rights, it requires a national response—which the pro-choice community is already organizing and executing.

Advocates have gone on the offensive, filing lawsuits in three states — Alaska, Missouri, and North Carolina — attacking abortion restrictions. And they've promised similar moves in other states. At a grassroots level, donations to local abortion funds as well as Planned Parenthood (in the name of former Indiana Governor Mike Pence, no less!), have soared.

This is certainly heartening, but it's just the beginning.

It's incumbent upon each of us as individuals — as well as within and across social justice movements — to fight every attempt to block abortion access. We have fought too hard and come too

far to let out-of-touch politicians roll back our rights.

No matter what state you live in, whether it's a friend or foe of *Roe*, do what you can: Call your state and federal representatives to voice your support of abortion access, donate to your local abortion fund, volunteer as a clinic escort, speak openly about abortion to help erase stigma and for the love of all that's pure and holy, pray/meditate/what-have-you that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg stays healthy for the next four years!

*This article originally appeared at [rewire.news](http://rewire.news).*

**OUR BODIES, OUR CHOICE:** A clinic escort at a March 2016 rally in Washington, D.C. in support of Planned Parenthood.

### GOP TAKES AIM

*Abortions constitute just 3 percent of Planned Parenthood's annual budget. It is against the law to use Medicaid dollars to fund abortions. These inconvenient facts, however, have not stopped Republicans from getting their crucifixes in a twist over federal funding for the national women's health care provider.*

*If there is anything Republicans have more antipathy for than Planned Parenthood it is the Affordable Care Act, Obama's signature health care law that, while deeply flawed, has provided access to health insurance for approximately 20 million Americans. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan and fellow GOP lawmakers have expressed an eagerness to both repeal Obamacare and defund Planned Parenthood in one fell swoop. To accomplish this they'll tuck provisions to defund Planned Parenthood in repeal legislation.*

*Here's where things get complicated. Revoking Planned Parenthood's Medicaid funding — \$390 million a year, nearly a third of the group's revenue — requires changing a federal law that allows Medicaid recipients to choose where they receive care among qualified providers.*

*Republicans hold 52 seats in the Senate. They have enough votes to repeal Obamacare — even if they haven't worked out a replacement — through a budget reconciliation bill*

*but they'll need 60 votes to break a Democrat filibuster and unravel the Medicaid law that funds Planned Parenthood.*

*Planned Parenthood also receives \$60 million annually under Title X of the Public Health Service Act, which sets aside funds for family planning. Republicans could revoke the money in an appropriations bill. A 2015 Congressional Budget Office analysis found that not spending the funds currently allocated for access to contraception, pregnancy counseling, and screenings for cancer and sexually transmitted diseases would lead to an additional \$130 million a year in Medicaid costs.*

*Here's one example of why: While governor of Indiana, Vice President Mike Pence cut state funds to Planned Parenthood. The organization was forced to close its rural clinics in 2013, including one in Scott County. Two years later the county was the site of an HIV outbreak. Two hundred people were infected before health officials brought it under control.*

— INDEPENDENT STAFF



LORIE SHAULL/FLICKR



# WHERE MOMS AND KIDS GO STRAIGHT TO JAIL

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S CONTROVERSIAL HANDLING OF CENTRAL AMERICAN MIGRANT CRISIS COULD GET WORSE UNDER TRUMP

BY RENÉE FELTZ

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS — Two years ago, Yanira López Lucas fled Guatemala with her daughter and teenage son after he refused to join a gang and their lives were threatened. When they came to the United States seeking asylum, they found themselves held at a former prison in South Texas that Geo Group had turned into a thousand-bed “family residential center.”

“I insist on saying we came to this county asking for help,” López says. “It’s not fair to make the women feel like they are criminals and the children feel guilty.”

Released after her claim was evaluated and considered “credible,” she was given a court date set for 2019. In the meantime, she helps at a shelter in San Antonio for families newly released from detention, where she makes sure to offer them a home-cooked meal of rice and beans.

“We prepare food for all the women that are coming in because, on the way here, a person doesn’t eat the way that a person really should be eating,” López says. “On top of that, in detention centers, the food is a total disaster. I went through that same thing and I know.”

López’s experience echoes that of thousands of asylum-seeking families from Central America subjected to the Obama administration’s “deterrence by detention” policy — put in place in 2014 in an effort to stop others from following them to the United States.

“I think everyone — advocates, the administration — thought this was a temporary thing, and we would nip this in the bud,” says Manoj Govindaiah, director of family detention services at the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services. “Unfortunately, it looks like it’s going to turn into some kind of protracted thing that’s here to stay, similar to adult detention. It looks like there is now this new space carved in the detention world for moms and kids.”

In fact, so many women and children continued to flee violence in Central America in the final months of 2016 that agents hastily erected large tents to hold them right next to busy ports of entry near the border towns of El Paso and McAllen.

“It’s like a tent city, and inside they have chain-link fence cages,” recalls Carlos García, an immigration lawyer who toured one of the facilities. “They call them temporary facilities, but they’re detention facilities nonetheless, where babies and children and parents are sleeping, are being jailed, while the government figures out what they’re going to do with them.”

Customs and Border Patrol has 72 hours to interview the so-called “family units,” collect their biometric data and send them to one of two detention centers about two hours away: the Geo Group prison in Karnes County, where López was held, or a 2,000-bed facility run by Core Civic in the small town of Dilley, next to a state prison and not far from a former internment camp for Japanese Americans.

A visit to the two family detention centers “triggered distressing associations of my own experience as a child” for psychotherapist Satsuki Ina, who was born in a Japanese-

American prison camp during World War II and believes locking children up is inherently traumatic.

“We too lived in a constant state of fear and anxiety, never knowing what our fate would be,” she told the American Civil Liberties Union. “We too were forced to share our living space with strangers, line up for meals, share public latrines, respond to roll call and adjust to ever-changing rules and regulations with the eyes of the guards constantly trained on us.”

In 2016, a Department of Homeland Security Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers urged the Obama administration to discontinue the general use of family detention. Among the problems it cited were allegations of medical neglect.

“On our third day in Dilley, she started having fevers and coughing,” remembers a young Honduran mother named Erica, who was detained with her then 14-month-old daughter and 3-year-old son. “When I took her to the medic, the hospital there, they told me there was nothing wrong with her.”

She was given acetaminophen and Vicks VapoRub, but the toddler continued to suffer. Erica became so concerned that she says, “I wanted to sign my deportation, because I wanted to get out of there. And I told the other moms there, but they told me to not do that.”

After multiple visits to the nurse, Erica was released to the shelter in San Antonio where she met López, and the staff became so alarmed at the child’s condition that within hours of her arrival they took her to the emergency room. She was diagnosed with pneumonia and an infection in her right lung, and had to be hospitalized for a week.

Now advocates worry Erica’s experience could become more common under Donald Trump, whose vow to “make America great again” includes a crackdown on immigrants and surrounding himself with policymakers who oppose oversight and regulation of private industry, including private prisons.

“This is not an immigration issue, it is a humanitarian crisis,” says Garcia. “We’re treating very poorly these children who are fleeing and asking for help. That is not who we should be as Americans.”

Meanwhile, Erica says she hopes Trump realizes “there are some who come here because they want to. But for a lot of us, it is not our dream to come, it is sad circumstances that lead us here to a country far from home.”

**FLIGHT:** After Erica fled Honduras with her two children and sought asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, she was held at a for-profit detention center in Texas where her daughter’s pneumonia went untreated.



RENÉE FELTZ

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# THE FUTURE OF WHITE SUPREMACY

## WILL TRUMP UNITE THE ALT-RIGHT, THE KLAN, THE ANARCHO-TRIBALISTS AND THE SUIT NAZIS?

BY LINDA MARTÍN ALCOFF & JOSÉ MARTÍN

About a month before the election, I (Linda) gave a talk at Nassau Community College on the topic of white identity. During the reception afterward, I was approached by a serious-faced young man, who identified himself as the president of the college philosophy club. He asked if I would consider doing a public debate with leading white nationalist Jared Taylor. He turned out to be an avid consumer of so-called “alt-right” websites, and had formed the belief that African-Americans and Latinos were simply less intelligent than white people.

As an African-American student waited patiently nearby to ask a question, I found myself in a debate with a young white male college student about whether, as a Latina, I was intelligent enough to be invited to give a talk at his college.

What has come to be called the alt-right is younger and more tech-savvy than the more established ultra-conservative organizations, and more focused on developing its online presence than on building rural militias. The term alt-right itself is controversial, but it helpfully indicates the way in which white nationalism has been hipsterized. It has ingeniously characterized blatant racism and misogyny as edgy and courageous, as fighting the good fight against censorship, thought control, and “political correctness” — much like the “men’s rights” movements to which it is linked.

These differences with the older far right are superficial. The alt-right is another reactive and violent backlash to racial progress, just as the Ku Klux Klan was to Reconstruction and the civil rights movement. Like other far-right groups since the ’60s, it cloaks white-supremacist politics as “anarcho-tribalism” or “white pride” rather than race hatred. As Taylor recently explained to comedian John Fugelsang, they simply “prefer homogeneity.” Today’s European far right similarly spins its agenda as a defense of the West’s values and cosmopolitanism that they say are now under threat from Muslim migrants. Its anti-Semitism is veiled by support for Israel, though its repeated suggestions that local Jews should migrate to Israel reveal darker motives. But these are the sort of rhetorical moves that draw in some young people who might not otherwise be attracted to cross-burning rallies (such as philosophy majors).

Taylor, considered a thought leader for the alt-right, argues that only separatism can guarantee white survival. The assumption here is that mixed children will no longer be white, and mixed cultures will blot out white traditions and beliefs, so that without separatism white identity will disappear. (European white nationalists make similar claims about European culture, as if it were ever “pure.”) But Taylor’s claim reveals the white supremacy behind white nationalism. The reason it is so important for pure whites to survive is always given in comparative terms: Because European values are superior to Muslim values, and because eliminating whites would eliminate the most intelligent and productive race on earth.

Alt-right leader Richard Spencer, head of the National Policy Institute, makes this racial comparison clear. “We were not

meant to beg for moral validation from some of the most despicable creatures to ever populate the planet,” he recently said. The alt-right’s assault on “political correctness” is a maneuver to ignore the viewpoints of other groups. Being “PC” is most often associated with the use of names and terms that various denigrated groups have chosen for themselves: disabled rather than “retarded,” women rather than “girls,” African-American rather than “colored.” To reject political correctness is a way of saying that white straight men don’t need to “beg for validation” or even listen to the preferences or views of anyone else any longer, and that ignoring the critical analyses of U.S. history and foreign policy that have emerged since the public airwaves became more diverse is simply a way of championing individual freedom.

It’s impossible to know how influential the alt-right really is, since it’s so easy to inflate the numbers of clicks on a website. What we do know is that white-nationalist ultra-conservative movements are growing in many countries and come in multiple forms. What some call “suit Nazis,” such as France’s National Front and Hungary’s Jobbik parties, overlap with the alt-right, but they are generally wealthier and operate in mainstream venues, holding elected office in many European countries, as well as running think tanks, publishing houses, and large transnational businesses. There are also still old-school groups, like the Klan and its spinoffs, that focus on setting up armed militias. Many of them can be characterized as white Christian nationalists.

There are more than rhetorical or stylistic differences among these groups. There are differences over strategy and tactics, over the centrality of Christianity, over support for big capital, and over which group should get the honor of being the most hated “other.” Most important, some of these groups are in favor of strong states and some are not. The “anarcho-tribalists” would rather not have more repressive state apparatuses, in Althusser’s sense, and many others are Pinochet-style fascists who promote free enterprise over state intervention. Some focus more on their negative freedoms, or the freedom from regulations, surveillance, censorship, and any government interference — as the slogan “don’t tread on me” indicates — while others focus on their positive freedoms to separate and control other communities, or the power to marshal a larger and more militarized police force, more draconian border patrols, and more surveillance on potential enemies.

Donald Trump’s election will test the intensity of these differences. The question of state capture is no longer theoretical: It has been accomplished. It may still be unclear ex-

actly how much influence the far right has in white working-class communities, but it is crystal clear how much influence they have in the White House. Steve Bannon, Trump’s chief strategist and second-ranking White House staffer, has been associated with far-right stances against Islam and same-sex marriage, and a style of “pro-Western culture” politics similar to that of France’s National Front. He and Trump are busily pursuing what seems to be a two-pronged program of dismantling regulations of every sort while arming the repressive apparatuses aimed at domestic groups.

The alt-right influence can also be seen in the way Trump defined his candidacy as more of a movement than a traditional electoral campaign. He has continued holding campaign-style rallies after the election was over, to keep his mass base mobilized. Bannon’s task is to frame the public narrative that will keep that base mobilized against any opposition, whether from moderate Republicans, liberals, or the left, that tries to block Trump’s appointments or policies. The violence and threats we saw during the election are likely to get much worse.

Hence what we are up against is not only the normal state apparatus, but assorted non-state actors as well. This might create a situation similar to that of many countries in Latin America, where the government blames paramilitary groups for some of the worst atrocities. Non-state actors will sometimes act under official direction, sometimes not, but their effect will undoubtedly embolden human-rights violations by law enforcement, from the local police to immigration agents, who will also enjoy diminished oversight. There are already Nazi sympathizers on the inside of these organizations, and some of them are people of color: Latinos are not immune from harboring an anti-Latino, anti-immigrant racism. Oddly enough, it won’t be just whites, or “pure” white Anglos, who defend the forces of white nationalism.

The best-case scenario will be if the varied far-right groups continue to bicker. In this case, we may “only” be up against a slew of disconnected attacks, and we may be able to use the disagreements among right-wing forces to waylay some reactionary legislation. The worst case scenario would be if the alt-right, suit Nazis, old-school white nationalists, and other far-right forces coalesce, in which case it may no longer be hyperbole to say that we are fighting fascism.

So what is to be done? There is no question that the left must take up a people’s defense against both concrete harassment and the ideological vilification of targeted groups.

### THE RACIST ROOTS OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

*Although the United States is a relatively new nation, it actually follows the oldest existing constitution still in use today. While some take such a fact as evidence of the firm bedrock our democracy rests on, it also means we have to remind ourselves where certain procedures originate.*

*This is especially the case after the presidential election we just witnessed, in which a man who lost the popular vote by more than 2.8 million will become president.*

*Way back during the hot summer of 1787, the Constitutional Convention was under way in Philadelphia and the delegates from Virginia had a problem. It was the most populous state in the new nation but approximately 40 percent of its inhabit-*

*ants were enslaved.*

*Any democracy, this thing that tens of thousands of people had only just recently fought and died for, that relied on a popular vote alone to determine its leaders would subordinate the interests of slave-masters in Virginia and other southern states to those of free voters in the north. Enslaved persons, after all, were not considered human let alone citizens with voting privileges.*

*At the insistence of Virginia’s James Madison a compromise was worked out among the 55 delegates in Independence Hall. Each state would be granted two representatives in the Senate while in the lower House of Representatives, representation was slotted in proportion to each state’s population. Slaves would be counted as three-fifths of a person.*

*The Electoral College too, “was an integral part of the odious pro-slavery three-fifths compromise” as Yale constitutional law professor Akhil Reed Amar points out in his recent offering, The Constitution*

*Today. As in the House, slave-economy states were given disproportionate representation in the Electoral College.*

*This worked out well for Virginia as 12 of the 46 electoral votes originally needed to capture an electoral college majority went to the state, and its plantation aristocrats, Madison among them, held the presidency for 32 of America’s first 36 years.*

*Today, the Electoral College’s place in our democracy tends to be forgotten, an arcane formality from the days of yore. We’ve tended not to notice it unless it is in contradiction with the popular vote, as was the case in 1876, 1888, 2000 and now. In this respect, Trump’s victory is a kind of slave-masters’ revenge.*

— INDYPENDENT STAFF





DAVID HOLLENBACH

Antifa (anti-fascist) organizing, which already exists across the country, as well as free legal services and legal defense for those facing deportation and incarceration, are going to be more important than ever. We will also need a massive effort to defend poor communities, white included, who will have less access to health care, education, affordable housing, and a living wage. It is estimated that states that refuse to increase their Medicaid rolls are going to cause 27,000 unnecessary deaths per year. This is a life-and-death struggle.

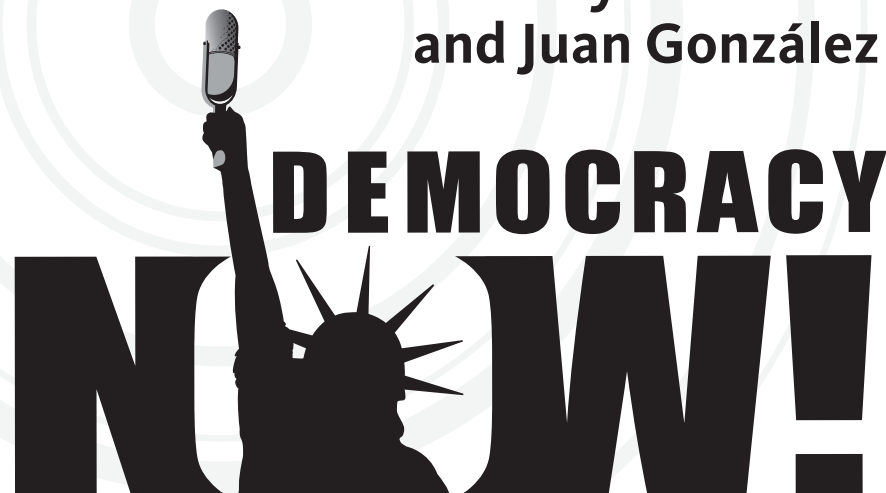
But we also need to go on the offensive, to build the spheres of meaningful political and civic engagement, from labor unions to neighborhood organizations to progressive religious communities to national networks. Progressive political groups of all sorts can help build and protect civil society, but they will now have to take security culture very seriously in regard to membership lists and online activity. We should also work to force existing mainstream organizations to take a stand, to drop their apolitical alibis, and actively defend democracy.

We have to combat fatalism. Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter are two powerful recent social movements that were created by young people who rejected the idea that they were powerless, even in the face of the power of Wall Street and a racist state. Our situation is not hopeless.

*Linda Martín Alcoff's most recent book is The Future of Whiteness, Polity Press, 2015. Here website is [www.alcoff.com](http://www.alcoff.com). José Martín is an anti fascist and copwatch organizer, researcher and media commentator. Follow him on twitter @sabokitty. This article originally appeared in the Jan. 2017 issue of The Independent. It is included here as part of our special Inaugural Revolt edition.*

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## WHAT WE WANT

- Accountability and justice for police brutality and ending racial profiling and targeting of communities of color;
- Dismantling the gender and racial inequities within the criminal justice system;
- Reproductive freedom;
- LGBTQIA rights;
- An equitable economy that provides paid parental leave, affordable childcare and healthcare for all;
- Workforce opportunities that reduce discrimination against women and mothers;
- Rights, dignity, and fair treatment for all unpaid and paid caregivers;
- A living minimum wage;
- Restoring and protecting voting rights;
- An all-inclusive Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution;
- Ending mass deportation, family detention, violations of due process, and violence against queer and trans migrants; and
- Clean water, clean air, and access to and enjoyment of public lands.

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# DREAMS OF MY PRESIDENT

## HOW HOPE AND CHANGE GAVE WAY TO CYNICISM AND RESENTMENT

BY DANNY KATCH

**I**nauguration Day marks the official transfer of power from Barack Obama to Donald Trump, but the real transition became painfully apparent earlier this month.

Obama gave a farewell address to thousands of adoring fans in Chicago on Jan. 10. He cast his presidency as another step in our long struggle for progress “that has given work and purpose to each new generation.” Linking the Founding Fathers with runaway slaves, World War II soldiers with Stonewall rioters, Obama evoked a liberal, patriotic vision of America as a country made great by its scrappy underdogs.

Eight years ago, it was startling and inspiring to hear this familiar Obama theme of our legacy of resistance coming from a president. The words sound more hollow now that we know how little the speaker threw himself and his mighty office behind that legacy’s current chapters.

Then came the following day’s spectacle. Trump’s first post-election press conference on Jan. 11 was a riot of dodged questions about corruption and denials of wild tales of Russian blackmail rings. It was easy to be nostalgic for even the empty eloquence of the departing president.

It is likely Obama’s stature will only grow with every passing day in the Thunderdome. But while he is obviously a far more appealing figure than his successor, it’s important to understand the ways that Obama’s presidency paved the way for Trump’s.

It was precisely because of his unique eloquence and dignity, in addition to the milestone of his breaking the White House color line, that Obama managed to restore hope in American progress and justice for millions of people. His failure to deliver on those hopes has ushered in an era of cynicism well suited for a lifelong real-estate hustler and self-branding specialist.

• • •

The defining moment of Obama’s presidency came perhaps unfairly early, in March 2009 at a meeting with the heads of the nation’s biggest banks. The financial institutions had recently been bailed out by furious taxpayers after their crooked loans sank the global economy. The massive public outrage gave the President enormous leverage to impose major reforms on the banks’ accounting rules, risky investment strategies and bloated executive compensation.

Obama’s leverage was further enhanced by his massive approval ratings — a now inconceivable 80 percent when he came into office — and the fact that the Democrats had won control of both houses of Congress. Rarely has a president ever had so much leverage over the lords of finance.

According to Ron Suskind’s insider account, *Confidence Men*, here’s what he told the bankers:

*“My administration is the only thing between you and the pitchforks. You guys have an acute public-relations problem that’s turning into a political problem. And I want to help. But you need to show that you get that this is a crisis and that everyone has to make some sacrifices. I’m not out there to go after you. I’m protecting you. But if I’m going to shield you from public and congressional anger, you have to give me something to work with on these issues of compensation.”*

*I want to help... I’m protecting you.* That’s all the bankers needed to hear. According to Suskind, they came into the meeting “nervous in ways these men are never nervous” but came out of it with their old arrogance, having offered Obama few specific suggestions. Soon the Tea Party would emerge and America’s anti-bank sentiment would become a Republican strength.

A pattern was set for the next eight years. Time and again, in the name of bipartisan compromise, Obama and the Democrats negotiated away their supporters’ demands, only to watch their opponents come up with more extreme new demands.

They ruled out single-payer health care from the start, abandoned the option for publicly financed health insurance, and ended up with a “universal” health-insurance law that was literally written by an insurance company executive. Even still, not a single Senate Republican voted for Obamacare.

The failed attempt to reach an immigration deal was even more disastrous. Rather than use his executive branch power to reduce or halt deportations as a negotiating ploy, Obama ramped up deportations to record levels to convince the Republicans that he was “serious about enforcement” and therefore they should be serious about legalization, which only succeeded in pushing the entire immigration debate rightward.

The result of these compromises and others was that most people’s living standards stagnated or declined. Inequality skyrocketed. Some people turned away from Obama and toward Trump. Many more still liked Obama, but concluded that if even he couldn’t deliver hope and change, than there is no hope.

Now we have a president whose message is that there is no noble American struggle in which we all take part. There is only us and them — Mexicans, Muslims, criminals. There are only deals with winners and losers. It’s time for us to abandon happy talk about the common good and stop being suckers.

• • •

Trump is taking over the state’s most repressive mechanisms from Obama’s mindful hands: the deportation system, the military, and history’s most extensive network of foreign and domestic surveillance.

When the government’s mass surveillance activities were exposed by the whistleblower Edward Snowden, Obama deployed his reputation as a thoughtful liberal to pooh-pooh criticism of the spying. “In the abstract you can complain about Big Brother and how this is a potential program run amok,” he said, “but when you actually look at the details, I think we’ve struck the right balance.”

Never mind that ordinary citizens were never granted access to “actually look at the details” — does anyone actually think that Obama’s successor will give a damn about balance?

Equally ominous is the way that Obama, who won the presidency in 2008 based on an antiwar reputation, has legitimated a Bush administration idea that used to horrify and enrage liberal opponents: our continual state of war, driven by paranoia about terrorism.

“For eight years that I’ve been in office,” Obama said in a recent speech at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida, “there has not been a day when a terrorist organization or some radicalized individual was not plotting to kill Americans.... I will become the first President of the United States to serve two full terms during a time of war.”

Obama has scaled down the deployment of large numbers of troops, but he’s greatly expanded the use of drones, cyberwar, and special operations forces — who are now active in 138 countries, more than twice as many nations as when he took office. They will report to Trump now.

Some Democrats will reject any hint of equivalency between Obama and Trump. After all, Obama carried himself with dignity and intelligence, without a single corruption scandal in eight years of desperate Republican digging. For his efforts, he was rewarded with a nonstop barrage of racist insults and disrespect — much of which was promoted by Trump through his “birther” conspiracy theories.

The fact that Obama’s greatest strengths — his personal dignity and honesty — ended up further entrenching the powers that be from the Pentagon to Wall Street should tell us that the political crisis we face is about powerful institutions more than any individual politician.



DANIEL BORMAN/FICKR



# KEEANGA-YAMAHTTA TAYLOR: THE POLITICS OF THE OPPRESSED

TOWARDS A MULTI-RACIAL, WORKING CLASS FEMINISM

BY PETER RUGH

**K**eeanga-Yamahtta Taylor is the author of *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Haymarket Books, 2016). Fellow Princeton professor Dr. Cornel West describes Taylor as “the most sophisticated and courageous radical intellectual of her generation.” Ahead of the women’s march on Washington, Taylor spoke with *The Independent* about working class feminism, identity politics, Obama and how social movements can take on Trump.

**THE INDEPENDENT:** *What do you hope the Women’s March will accomplish?*

KEEANGA-YAMAHTTA TAYLOR: The march marks the beginning of the Trump resistance. Not only will this be a source of embarrassment for Trump, it will also be the very beginning of building the kinds of connections, relationships and new organizing needed to confront the new president. Since the election there has been so much shock, anger, sadness and despair. Demonstrating is the way out of it. We can still be angry but we need to get beyond the disbelief and despair and into the organizing.

Standing shoulder-to-shoulder with hundreds of thousands of people will cut into the isolation and misery many of us have been experiencing. We will feel defiant and confident. We have to turn that same spirit into organizing and protest. Saturday is the first of a million steps necessary in the rebuilding of our social movements.

*Are there immediate steps you recommend women, people of color, immigrants and allies take to defend themselves against Trumpism?*

There are some fights that we can anticipate and should begin to prepare for: an attack on immigrants; an attack on the low wage worker struggle; an attack on reproductive rights; heightened confidence and aggression of police directed at African Americans and other racially and ethnically oppressed communities. We should already be preparing defense committees, but also pursuing strategies that look to unite the broadest coalitions and groups of people to take on Trump.

Of course, it is much easier to say this than to put the human and material resources together to make it happen. Yet, there are activists who have been involved in this work for a very long time. Our bigger challenge, as a left, is to figure out how we draw new people into our movements.

The second challenge is developing genuine solidarity among those people who recognize the need to struggle. Our movements have been riven by division and strife. Those divisions cannot just be papered over. Some of them are grounded in politics, strategic questions and genuine differences of opinion on how to move forward. We have to create political spaces within which we can

have healthy exchanges and debates about this political period, what is needed and, more generally, how to achieve our goals. It’s a big challenge.

*On the left, a lot of criticism has been heaped upon identity politics as practiced by the mainstream Democratic Party. But a lot of people are simultaneously feeling under attack based on their identities. What would you say to these folks and their allies?*

The notion that the Democratic Party lost the national election and has continued to lose in statewide battles because they are beholden to the LGBT, Black, Latino and other oppressed groups’ votes is to really ignore reality. Of course, the Democratic Party tries to appeal to these groups, but typically on the basis that the GOP will be worse for them. And appeals that are made are rarely reinforced with actual, tangible benefits. This political posturing should not be confused with actual politics.

There is such a thing as “identity politics.” It was born from the struggles of people oppressed on the basis of their identity. These politics of the oppressed have been deployed at various times in response to a typically unresponsive society. The Democratic Party is and historically has been a central part of that oppression. It’s always important to distinguish between the politics of the oppressed and the politics of the oppressor.

There is an entirely separate question for the left to consider — which is, can identity politics, alone, liberate the oppressed? But that debate has nothing to do with the Democrats.

*After Clinton ran a campaign promoting what many people see as an upper middle-class version of feminism, what do you see in terms of prospects for a broader-based feminism that speaks to issues of class and appeals to women of color?*

The material conditions for the re-emergence of working class feminism never go away. Those conditions, in fact, are about to become even more dire as Trump’s right-wing agenda will have a disproportionately destructive impact on women, and especially women of color. But the question of new organization or the re-emergence of a certain kind of politics is not only about the existence of material conditions but is very much a subjective, political issue.

We should expect to see the emergence of struggles around abortion rights, low-wage work, sexual violence, child care among other issues that are central to working class women’s quality of life. The class character of these struggles will be undeniable as we can expect economic inequality to deepen and worsen during the Trump regime.

*How much weight or significance should we give to the symbolic value of the Obama Presidency?*

For most African Americans, I would venture to guess,

there will always be a sense of pride and even accomplishment for the Obama Administration — especially when contrasted to the boorish corruption of what preceded and of what will follow it. But as to its value or significance? For the vast majority of Black people, beyond symbolism, there will be very little value.

If we are to charge the worthiness of a political regime based on the improved quality of life for ordinary people, then on what basis would the Obama Administration be judged as anything but ordinary or underwhelming?

That is not to cast complete and total blame for the dysfunction or ineffectiveness of our government in his direction. But it is to say that he was somewhat inconsequential in the everyday lives of most ordinary people, including most Black people. One need look no further than the Trump victory to understand that. If Obama was truly as great and transformative as he seems to think he is then he will have to explain why Clinton received 4 million fewer votes than he did in 2008, even though 6 million more people voted in 2016. The election was deemed his third term. That is a pretty damning fact.

*Given the increased interest in socialism these days, how can socialists avoid the pitfalls that befell their 20th Century predecessors; splits, sectarianism, dogma?*

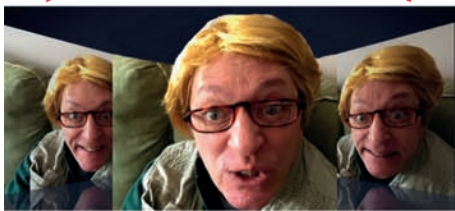
No socialist organization or any left organization for that matter has ever started with the perspective of being sectarian, dogmatic, marginal or irrelevant. It’s better to ask, “Why are there some groups on the radical or socialist left that fall into this category? How did the state’s war against the left in the 1960s and 70s affect these groups? How did the shift in the American political economy impact leftwing organizations? What were the lingering effects of McCarthyism and the Cold War on socialist organizations in the United States?”

These are important questions to ask. If we can understand the broader context, it can help avoid thinking the state of the U.S. left is only a matter what people do or not do alone.

That being said, everyone must realize that it’s a new day. There are literally millions of people radicalizing in the United States. Thirteen million people voted for Sanders, an open socialist. Any socialist organization that is not twiddling its thumbs should be able to win people to a deeper understanding of socialism and to being organized. We must open up organizations and engage with new radicals and help build a new left that can take on the many, many challenges presented by Trump.



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Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

"This brilliant book is the best analysis we have of the #BlackLivesMatter moment of the long struggle for freedom in America. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor has emerged as the most sophisticated and courageous radical intellectual of her generation."  
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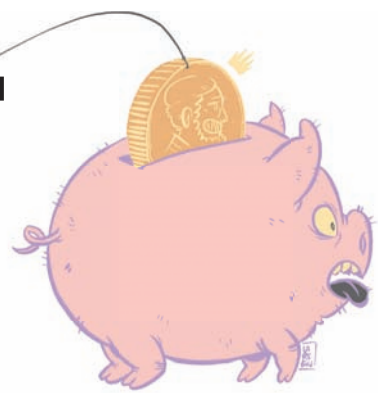
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### A FRAYING SAFETY NET

## ELDER ABUSE REPUBLICANS THREATEN SOCIAL SECURITY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



BY ERIC LAURSEN

Donald Trump is rolling out his White House team and forging alliances with Capitol Hill Republicans he once claimed to disdain. In the process, the conversation on Social Security has changed drastically and, for millions of Americans in the later years of their working lives, disastrously.

The US is racing toward a retirement crisis, fueled by the elimination of traditional employer-sponsored pension plans in the private sector and full-frontal attacks on those for public employees, the failure of 401(k) and other employee retirement savings plans to provide an adequate replacement, and the failure of Congress to increase Social Security benefits to make up for these shifts.

For decades, Washington has more or less ignored this problem, focusing instead on finding ways to cut benefits to solve Social Security's long-term funding problems — even though these problems are really a function of decades-long wage stagnation, which means fewer payroll tax dollars to fund the system (over \$750 billion is collected annually). And even though the decline of pensions has made Social Security more vital to working people than ever: Some 60 million people nationally receive old-age and disability benefits every year, making it by far the biggest income support program in the country. Social Security is immensely important in New York State as well, where 3.5 million people receive retiree, spousal, survivors', and disability benefits.

It was an extremely hopeful sign when, two years ago, the conversation started to change. Democrats like Sens. Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, and Sherrod Brown, and advocacy groups led to Social Security Works, began talking up proposals to boost Social Security benefits significantly for the first time in more than 40 years.

But with the Trump's election, all such talk has died out. Much has been made of the fact that the president-elect, during his campaign, argued against cutting Social Security, setting himself apart from virtually every other Republican candidate. But in previous years he has supported it, and the principal argument he mustered during the campaign was that cutting Social Security was a political non-starter — not that he didn't think it made sense on the merits.

Now that he's planning his transition, Trump is focused on repealing Obamacare and passing a massive tax cut that would overwhelmingly benefit the richest Americans. To do so, he's cozying up to Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell. Ryan, the GOP's congressional policy driver, has been pushing to "reform" — i.e., cut—Social Security for years. Tax breaks for the rich always come first when Republicans control both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue — they're the GOP version of crystal meth — and it's more likely than not

that political prudence will keep them from attacking Social Security, at least during the first Trump administration.

Should Trump be reelected, however, anything could happen. With Ryan and McConnell by his side to wheedle and flatter him, he just might decide to adopt Social Security "reform" as a legacy issue. The good news is that Warren and Sanders are expected to assume a higher profile in the Senate — and both are even more convinced that tacking to the center would be fatal to Democrats. Chuck Schumer, who will become minority leader, hasn't supported expanding Social Security, but has never supported cutting it either, and has happily attacked Republicans for doing so. Together, that suggests the Dems can exercise the discipline to stall any challenge to the program with a filibuster threat.

The bad news is that the balance of power could shift in 2018, when 23 Democratic Senate seats will be up for reelection — and in the era of Citizens United, it's only become harder for candidates to resist the lure of big money and the policy positions it tends to favor. Centrists will argue that the Dems either have to tack to the right or face big losses.

Some Democratic-leaning power centers in Washington were pushing back against progressive positions on issues like Social Security even before the election. The Progressive Policy Institute, a center-right think-tank, published an op-ed in late October resurrecting the flawed argument that Social Security crowds out other spending — this despite the fact that the program is entirely self-funding — and that Democrats must stop "favoring" the elderly over everyone else. The AARP, a huge lobbying power with 37 million retired or over-50 members, attempted to straddle the line politically with an ad campaign that posits an enormous loss of benefits if Social Security isn't "reformed" right away.

What's to be done? Progressives who have defended Social Security for years have pushed back hard with a petition demanding AARP stop buying into right-wing arguments about the program. They are also focusing on the pledges the president-elect made during his campaign. "If Trump goes along with plans to cut or privatize Social Security, this is a huge breach of faith with voters," writes Dean Baker of the Center for Economic and Policy Research. Activists should hold his feet to the fire, and if he broaches the subject, "this should be a career ending move for Trump and any of his accomplices."

Those concerned about the fate of retirement in America may want to look for warning signs well in advance, however.

*Eric Laursen is the author of The People's Pension (AK Press, 2012). This article originally appeared in the Dec. 2016 Indypendent. It is included here as part of our special Inaugural Revolt edition.*



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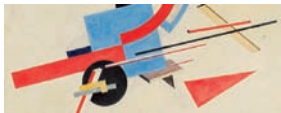


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Sam SalourPerhaps the most curious  
and least understood  
aspect of Marx's work is  
his method of analysis.Marx viewed economic laws as tendencies and it is  
hard to deny that those tendencies are becoming more  
and more the realities of today's capitalism. However,  
to understand our society we need to do more than  
reading and accepting his concepts, we must critically  
analyze and look for the way of thinking that produced  
them. It is with this goal in mind that we embark on a  
journey through the long and complex sentences of the  
*Grundrisse*. Here we can find the best representation  
of the process of thinking that found its culmination  
in *Capital* • **Sam Salour** is a mathematician and  
graduate student at The New School.MONDAYS • beginning JANUARY 30  
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**Introduction to MARXISM**  
with Sudeb MitraThe purpose of  
this course is to  
give an intro-  
duction to some  
of the main  
ideas of Marxand Engels, focusing on the materialist understanding  
of history and the theory of surplus value. We will  
study a number of texts, including "The Part Played by  
Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man" by Engels,  
Stephen Jay Gould's "Posture Maketh The Man",  
*Socialism: Utopian & Scientific* by Engels, and Marx &  
Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* and other readings.  
• **Sudeb Mitra** is a professor of mathematics at  
Queens College (CUNY), and the Graduate Center  
(CUNY). He is especially interested in Marx/Engels  
and the Sciences.THURSDAYS • beginning FEBRUARY 2  
5:30 pm • 10 week CLASS & DISCUSSION  
**Highlights of CAPITAL,  
VOLUME 1** with Juliet UcelliThis course is an  
accessible intro to  
the primary source-  
book on Marxist  
analysis. We'll cover  
key concepts and  
sections of *Capital, Volume I*: use value, value and  
surplus value; why capitalism needs conquest,  
enslavement and white supremacy; why capitalism  
drives innovation, overwork and unemployment and  
leads to ecological destruction. *Participant reports and  
life experiences are welcome!* • **Juliet Ucelli** has taught  
labor economics and class/race/gender for unions and  
activists, and writes on Eurocentrism in Marxist theory  
and Marxist understandings of human development.FRIDAYS • beginning FEBRUARY 17  
6:00 pm • 14 week CLASS & DISCUSSION  
**Early MARX & ENGELS  
(1841-1844)** with Russell DaleThis course will focus  
on two early works by  
Marx and one by Marx  
& Engels. Marx's works  
are his doctoral disserta-  
tion of 1841 on ancient  
Greek atomistic theory  
and his 1843 Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*.  
The work by Marx and Engels is *The Holy Family*, or  
*Critique of Critical Critique* of 1844. • **Russell Dale**  
is an activist and a philosopher. He teaches philosophy  
at Lehman College, CUNY. He taught classes on  
Hegel and various other topics for the last eight years.**OTHER CLASSES:**

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Tuesdays • DIALECTICAL GUIDE to the GALAXY • The  
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# MEET TRUMP'S PUBLIC ED WRECKING BALL

## BILLIONAIRE BETSY DEVOS IS RADICAL PRIVATIZER WITH NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE AS PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT OR EDUCATOR

BY LEONIE HAIMSON

Donald Trump's nomination of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education could be a devastating blow for American public schools.

"DeVos's agenda is to break the public education system, not educate kids, and replace it with a for-profit model," John Austin, president of the Michigan State Board of Education, told the *Detroit Free Press* after her appointment was announced Nov. 23. "It's like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse, and hand-feeding it schoolchildren."

DeVos is the daughter of a wealthy auto-parts manufacturer who funded Christian-right causes, and her brother Erik Prince founded the mercenary company Blackwater. She married Dick DeVos, the billionaire heir to the Amway fortune. The two, based in Grand Rapids, Mich., have used their personal wealth to encourage the expansion of charter schools, to prevent any government oversight of their use of public funds or regulation of the quality of education they provide and to aggressively promote the use of vouchers to let taxpayer funds pay for private and parochial schools.

She would be the first Secretary of Education who never attended a public school or sent her own children to one. She has never worked as a teacher, served on a school board, or held any position in government.

DeVos is an even more radical privatizer than either Arne Duncan or John King, President Barack Obama's education secretaries. Both Duncan and King favored expanding the charter sector, offering these publicly funded, privately run schools more than \$1.5 billion in federal grants between 2010 and 2015. The Department of Education's Race to the Top program offered states the chance of winning millions more if they let the number of charter schools expand. Many states, including New York, then raised their charter caps.

The DeVos family is among the leading donors to the Republican Party. According to an analysis by OpenSecrets.org, they have given at least \$20.2 million to GOP candidates, party committees, PACs, and super PACs. They also finance far-right groups that promote climate-change denial, oppose marriage equality, and want to cripple labor unions, such as Michigan's Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Another group they support, the Acton Institute, argues for the abolition of child-labor laws.

"I have decided to stop taking offense at the suggestion that we are buying influence," Betsy DeVos said in 1998. "Now I simply concede the point. They are right. We do expect something in return. We expect to foster a conservative governing philosophy consisting of limited government and respect for traditional American virtues. We expect a return on our investment."

The couple's primary education organization is the American Federation for Children, which PR Watch describes as a conservative 501(c)(4) dark-money group. Her 501(c)(3), which is not allowed to support political candidates, is the Alliance for School Choice. In 2006, the Ohio Elections Commission fined a DeVos-founded group called All Children Matter \$5.2 million — the largest election-violation fine in state history — for laundering \$870,000 through its national office to avoid the state's \$10,000 limit on individual contributions. The group did this even after the commission told them that was illegal — and then never paid the fine. According to the most recent report from

the American Federation for Children, they gave nearly \$5 million in 2016 to pro-privatization candidates in 12 states

Last spring, she and her husband used the influence of their money to bully Michigan legislators into voting against on a bill proposed by Republican Gov. Rick Snyder that would have provided modest government oversight for the explosion of unregulated, poor-quality and often corrupt for-profit charter schools in that state. Michigan gives nearly \$1 billion a year in aid to charters, many of which refuse to disclose their finances and channel contracts to their own officials. According to a *Detroit Free Press* investigation, 38 percent rank in the bottom quarter of Michigan schools academically.

Public-school supporters had some successes in some states in the November election. In Georgia and Massachusetts, multiracial coalitions of unions, parents and school-board members overwhelmingly defeated well-funded privatization efforts. In Washington state, Bill Gates and other technology magnates lost in their effort to unseat judges who had concluded that the public funding of charter schools was unconstitutional in that state

In New York, though, the Republicans who control the state Senate support expanding charter schools and giving parents tax credits for private and parochial-school tuition. Governor Andrew Cuomo has also promoted the expansion of the charter sector at the expense of public schools. The New York State United Teachers did not endorse Democratic challengers in several extremely close Senate races on Long Island, and parents and rank-and-file teachers who volunteered on their campaigns were disappointed. At the same time, pro-charter PACs such as StudentsFirstNY's New Yorkers for a Balanced Albany spent millions to keep the state Senate in GOP hands. These funds paid for attack ads against the challengers that never mentioned the words "charter schools"—because most Long Island voters do not favor charter schools.

Trump has proposed a \$20 billion federal voucher program that would most likely be financed with Title I funds, which since the mid-1960s have provided additional aid to public schools with large numbers of poor children. He has said that he would use these funds to give state incentives to contribute another \$110 billion of their own money to vouchers.

With both houses in Congress in Republican hands, we will have a fierce battle on our hands to withstand the destructive impulses of Trump and DeVos. Aiding them will be a flood of money poured into lobbying campaigns by billionaires, Wall Street financiers, edu-entrepreneurs, and religious institutions, all eager to divert taxpayer funds into private hands and dismantle our public schools. Public school parents, teachers, and advocates must be smart and work together to withstand this assault.

*Leonie Haimson is executive director of Class Size Matters and cochair of the Parent Coalition for Student Privacy. This article originally appeared in the Jan. 2017 issue of The Independent. It is included here as part of our special Inaugural Revolt edition.*



GINO BARZIZZA



## WEARING THE HIJAB

*Continued from page 4*

a commercial store, you go up to the cashier and make sure you avail yourself of the people around you. You don't want to walk in a residential area in which there are not a lot of other people there."

We have these very frank discussions in front of my younger children, who are as young as five, opening up their ears because they have to know. They have to be careful.

I know a woman who is non-Muslim — she happens to be Asian-American — and she was with two young ladies, one of whom was her daughter, and the other was a friend of her daughter's who was wearing a hijab. They were on public transportation and somebody said something rude and racist to the one who was wearing a hijab.

The woman got very upset and treated it like an attack on her own daughter. She completely pushed back, saying: "How dare you talk to her this way? This is a young girl. This is America. She's free to wear what she wants, how she wants, just like I'm free to be the way that I want."

She spoke up, and I'm glad that the younger person had somebody like her on her side.

We need to treat these incidents it as if it's your child, your friend, your parent who is under attack. If we look at it with that perspective, common sense dictates that we as bystanders step in, while being safe, whenever possible, and help out.

One of the ways that Islamophobia really spreads is because of a cloud of suspicion that certain public policies promote. We have a city administration that has very openly and publicly supported refugees coming into New York, that has supported Muslims and said, "We will stand with our Muslim neighbors, there's no room for hatred."

But then there's this other piece of it. We know for a fact that the New York Police Department targets Muslim communities for surveillance. Ninety-five percent of the Intelligence Bureau's investigations from 2010 to 2015 were directed at Muslims, according to the NYPD Inspector General. Does not that, in and of itself, promote Islamophobia?

When you're spying on and surveilling Muslim communities it inflames suspicion.

Then there's the issue of data retention. On the city level, Mayor Bill de Blasio has said that he will not give federal agencies information on NYC ID card recipients. That's great. But that same promise has not been made with all the documentation and surveillance information on the Muslim community. Let's not forget the Demographics Unit that operated under de Blasio's predecessor. What are they going to do with that information?

We're pushing for answers with other organizations, not just Muslim organizations but other groups of people who are concerned with data retention and how

the Trump administration may use it, especially with threats of a registry, increased surveillance and whatnot.

We want a promise that officials will not share if they haven't already. We're asking for more transparency and knowledge, with the understanding that it's a fine line when you're dealing with national security issues. But you can't trample civil liberties.

*Afaf Nasher directs the Council on American-Islamic Relations of New York, cair-ny.org.*

## WHEN YOUR BOSS LOVES TRUMP

*Continued from page 5*

nial." It would be very ad hominem, a dismissal. So I never assert myself.

None of the left-leaning people in the office are going to say anything. Especially since Election Day. My boss was shouting, "Okay, if any of you guys have to leave work early to vote, please do — I mean, only if you're voting for Trump." She literally told a client, "You're an idiot for not voting for Trump."

Headphones are one of my coping mechanisms. I kind of just sit quietly and do my work. Now and then I'm asked to type up something for our company blog about how great Trump is and I'll accidentally leave out adjectives. I'm be transcribing my boss saying things like: "A fantastic victory for Trump." And I'll leave out "fantastic." Sometimes nobody proofreads, but some-

times they do and I have to put "fantastic" back in.

One interesting problem that we have to deal with right now is that a lot of our clients are unhappy with the election. Clients have told us: "I'm scared. I'm scared that this is happening, I'm scared that we elected this man. This is really awful. I don't know what to do, I'm kind of panicking." My boss and coworkers are surrounded mostly by other people in the industry who agree with them, and they are completely taken aback — they had no idea!

I can't really make any change in my office, but I definitely want to get active. I have to. I attended a DSA [Democratic Socialists of America] meeting and I'm looking into getting involved with them. I'm going to be there for the Women's March. I don't know if I'll be able to go to D.C., but there's going to be something in New York.



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# STAYING SANE WHILE A DERANGED MAN IS IN THE WHITE HOUSE

INTERVIEW BY INDYPENDENT STAFF

**S**ascha Altman DuBrul is a lifelong activist, a former member of the punk band Choking Victim and the founder of the Icarus Project, a peer-to-peer mental-health support network. The group's stated mission is to "advance social justice by fostering mutual aid practices that reconnect healing and collective liberation." We spoke with him about maintaining our sanity while a sociopath occupies the White House.

**THE INDYPENDENT:** Donald Trump's win has been likened to a political 9/11. Do you have any thoughts on dealing with grief and going beyond it?

SASCHA ALTMAN DUBRUL: A political 9/11 sounds like an appropriate way to talk about it, but what we need to remember is that we are part of a long tradition of people who are fighting fascism, fighting for control of our lives.

I remember a conversation that was happening shortly after 9/11, that maybe we'd realize that America isn't exceptional, that we can die in big terrorist attacks too. But that's not what happened. We turned to American exceptionalism. Part of what we need to do is look to our brothers and sisters around the world who have been dealing with these fools — these power-hungry fools who have been in office for a long time.

A lot of folks get involved in political activism because they're sensitive, because they feel things more strongly than others. It's of the utmost importance that folks like us understand that not everyone is so sensitive, and that we need to learn to take care of each other.

If you were going to reduce it down to something very basic, a good question to ask is how to make sense of craziness, or of being sane in a world that's obviously really crazy. Maybe we can diagnose the society that we're living in a little more and look at the ways that we're not raised to have each other's backs. At a moment like this, it's really important that we have each other's backs.

**The epitome of that social madness is Trump, right? How do we prevent this irrational man from driving us crazy?**

A very tangible, practical thing that I've been practicing with people in my community for a long time now is getting together in groups and writing down what things are the most important to us — what are our goals, what are our missions? How do we know when we're healthy? What are the signs that you're struggling, that you're having a hard time? We all have those signs and they look different for different folks. People can tune in to themselves and it's a really useful thing to do in groups.

Anyone who knows me knows that if I'm kind of glassy-eyed and staring off into space, I need to eat some fuckin' food. I need to get some rest! And I have the basic things that I know I need to do to take care of myself. At times like these — times of crisis — it's actually really important to go back to the basics; getting enough food, getting enough sleep, making sure we exercise, making sure we have routines and then making sure that we have a community around us to be able to support us.

**Where does spirituality factor into mental health?**

I like to be in the company of people who have a spiritual practice, who meditate. Having a spiritual grounding, and once again, having a sense of being part of something larger than yourself, that's something that communities around the world have that we have a lot to learn about in our Western culture.

**A lot of people are feeling under attack — immigrant communities, Muslim communities, women. How would you suggest that people address these feelings?**

One of the most powerful things that I've seen since the election is the groups of concerned citizens getting together to do trainings on what to do in public spaces when people are being attacked. The answer is solidarity.

In some ways I'm speaking as a white man who's not under attack in the same way that immigrant communities are. I think the question on my end is more like how to make conscious acts of practicing solidarity with other people and make it clear that I'm an ally.

**We're going to be looking at a lot of rollbacks on gains that people have fought for. This ties into grief and a**

**AT A MOMENT LIKE THIS, IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE EACH OTHER'S BACKS.**

**sense of loss. How can we gird ourselves for loss?**

I had this old communist grandpa who had a little pin on his sailor cap he'd always wear that said: "Don't mourn, organize." At some point I realized that first you mourn, and then you organize. Mourning is an incredibly important part of the process, being able to recognize what we've lost and not just jumping straight into action. We have to do it together. We have to create spaces where we can mourn together and then move forward.

## THE REVOLUTION

By Eileen Myles

The revolution is facing this way. Their song is only briefly alarming you don't have to do a thing she said in the cadence of gentle rules the switching about which I never understand the way I stand betrays a dream but for now I will not get shot. I was asked to demonstrate once and I can feel it building in me so sweet I'm sorry for trying so hard for you always come like the sun. I made a few gestures. I was young & had not been watched yet. I recall the white comb dripping artfully I was quickly told to sit down because of those foolish faces and gestures I still bear. I have the same birthday as a famous clown. When it begins we will dance at the front with our sad faces and everyone will tell the story later. Did you see when they shot the clown. That was supposed to happen someone quietly said. They were like our flag of feeling & I was. I've been thinking it's time to apologize to you. I was holding a guitar out & playing us. This morning's

light reminds me of that in my revolutionary direction winter and how it loves me as a dreamer is loved as everything should. I was walking us out onto the ice with my heart that incessant playing of mine past when everything is wrong. She will find me again I murmur in this time I should be doing more you think I would play my guitar at the front if not my clown smile. The bullet is like being told to sit down. You are too awkward I was inviting you to share your gift and you make a mockery of it. I wish everyone had a gun then I would be loved.



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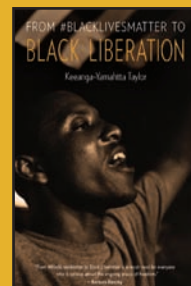
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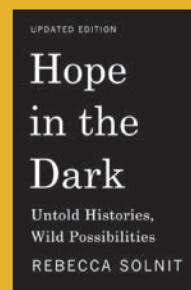


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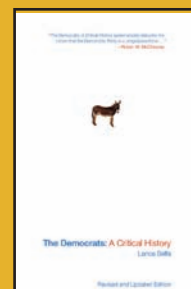


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LANCE SELFA

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## NO ONE IS ILLEGAL: FIGHTING RACISM AND STATE VIOLENCE ON THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

JUSTIN AKERS CHACÓN AND MIKE DAVIS

Countering the chorus of anti-immigrant voices, Mike Davis and Justin Akers Chacón expose the racism of anti-immigration vigilantes and put a human face on the immigrants who risk their lives to cross the border to work in the United States.



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